

A
L E T T E R
T O

J. C. LETTSOM, M.D. F.R.S. S.A.S. &c.

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F. R. S. S. A. S. &c.

Occasioned by

BARON DIMSDALE'S REMARKS ON

DR. LETTSOM'S LETTER

T O

SIR ROBERT BARKER, AND G. STACPOOLE, Esq.

UPON

GENERAL INOCULATION.

BY AN UNINTERESTED SPECTATOR

OF THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN BARON DIMSDALE AND
DR. WATKINSON, ON THE ABOVEMENTIONED
SUBJECT.

L O N D O N :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

As it is now the fashion to pay little regard to anonymous publications, some may be apt to wonder that the Author of the following Letter has not subscribed it with his name. He is neither afraid nor ashamed to own his work, but has reasons for chusing to remain unknown. He can however safely declare, that he has no *pecuniary interest* to serve. If arguments are rational and valid, they will support themselves; if they are not, it must be a feeble assistance indeed which they can derive from a name or title of what rank soever.

E R R A T A.

Page 17. line 5. *for* " That they might do so in a great measure is certain, but that they would do so is, &c." *read* " That this might have been done in a great measure is certain, but that it would have been done is, &c."

Line 8. *for* " their carelessness," *read* " carelessness."

A
L E T T E R

TO

J.C. LETTSOM, M.D. F.R.S. S.A.S. &c.

SIR,

I HAVE lately perused Baron Dimisdale's Remarks on your Letter to Sir Robert Barker, and George Stacpoole, Esquire, on the subject of General Inoculation; and some observations having occurred on the perusal, I take the liberty of communicating them to you.

THE gentlemen who support the Society for general inoculation, and the gentlemen who are employed by them in the capacity of physicians, profess humanity to be the motive of their conduct; Baron Dimisdale, one of the gentlemen who object to the propriety of that institution, professes

professes it to be the motive of his; and it is hoped they are all sincere in their professions.

MEN's opinions will differ, but when opportunity of knowing, and ability of judging, are supposed to be equal, that opinion which cannot be suspected of being influenced by interest, will have most weight with thinking and impartial persons. Your opinion has been declared in favour of the Society, but you can have no interest in making the declaration. If inoculation once becomes familiar to the poor, it will soon be a matter of no difficulty to the rich; the attendance of a fashionable inoculator, or even of a common physician, will not any longer be deemed necessary, but the whole management of the affair be confided to the family apothecary.

WHOEVER discovered or hinted the present successful method of inoculation, Sutton and Dimf-dale were certainly the first who introduced it into general use; they did an essential service to mankind, and they received, in return, the thanks, the applause, and indeed the more substantial favours of the Public. Pity would it be, if either of those gentlemen,

gentlemen, or any other person, who has had extensive opportunities of observing the benefit of the practice, should, from any private motive, wish to confine to the rich a blessing which on the contrary they ought to assist the poor to obtain.

THE opponents of the Society ground their opposition principally on two positions :

First. THAT, since the introduction of inoculation, the mortality of the smallpox in London has increased; whence they infer, that, although an advantage to individuals, it has been an injury to the community; and that if it has diminished the number of subjects among the rich, it has been a means of extending infection among the poor.

Secondly. THAT no man, for the benefit of himself, or of any person he means to serve, has a right to do an act which may possibly be injurious to others.

PERHAPS, by an impartial examination of these positions, the Public may be enabled to form a more competent judgment, than has yet been formed, of the propriety or impropriety of supporting the Society.

To

To prove that fewer persons died of the smallpox in London, in proportion to the sum total of deaths in certain periods of years before the introduction of inoculation, than in certain similar periods since, tedious tables of calculations, formed on the bills of mortality, have been repeatedly produced; but by them nothing has been proved decisive to the point in question.

THAT fewer persons died of the smallpox in London in proportion to the whole number of deceased in forty years precedent to the use of inoculation, than in forty years succeeding it, may be true; but by no means proves a less frequency or fatality of the disease, among a given number of subjects at one time than at the other. That there were 600 smallpox deaths out of 10,000 total apparent decease per annum, in the first series of years, and 1,000 smallpox deaths out of 10,000 total apparent decease in the second, may be true; but does not demonstrate that out of 600,000 people the distemper destroyed in one period 600, and in the next 1,000: on the contrary, no certainty appears but that the difference may be owing to an increase of inhabitants, and that the city contained during one forty years 600,000, and

and in the other forty years a million: the bills of mortality indeed indicate no such increase, which is a circumstance surprising and unaccountable. The bills for the five years 1701,—1705, amounted to 105,453, those for the five years 1710,—1714, to 113,277, and those for the five years 1771,—1775, only to 110,887 ; yet that there must have been a very great addition to the numbers of London within the present century, will be allowed by every thinking man who finds no visible diminution of population with such a prodigious augmentation of building *. Some have attributed this circumstance to a greater degree of salubrity in the air, resulting from the improvements of the city, and to a greater proportion of lives preserved by discoveries in the art of physic. This supposition seems feasible at first sight, and undoubtedly both these causes have had their effect, but man is not im-

* In the 10 years, 1734,—1743, both inclusive, there died 271,924, a far greater number than died in any 10 years before or since; yet no reason can be given why London was more populous then, than before or after. But it is well known that the city was unhealthy during that period, and that an unusual proportion died under two years of age; in five of those years there died above 10,000 infants per annum: the usual number is about 7, or 8,000.

mortal; those who did not die at thirty or forty, must die at seventy or eighty; and as the number of people gradually increased, there must have been a gradual increase of deaths in the more advanced ages. It may indeed be objected, that the abovementioned improvements and discoveries are of recent date, and were made suddenly; consequently those who were rescued by them from premature death, have not yet died the death of nature: how far this opinion is right, time must manifest.

SOME have endeavoured to account for this disparity between the number of recorded deaths, and the augmented number of people, by supposing that many of the opulent, retiring in chronic diseases, for the benefit of air, or medicinal waters, die in the country. The disparity however seems too great to be effected by this means; the proportion of those retiring to the country and dying there, cannot be very considerable; the mystery indeed appears at present inexplicable; but endeavours to explain it might be worthy the attention of the curious *.

ADMITTING

* I claim not the merit of starting this idea of an increased population in London as a novelty; it has been hinted by others, particularly

ADMITTING, however, that a greater number of smallpox deaths among an equal number of people have really occurred since, than before the introduction of inoculation, that fact does not by any means criminate the practice.

SINCE the improved mode of treating the natural disease has taken place, it cannot be supposed more mortal than before, and therefore the number of sick, as well as the number of dead, must have been augmented ; but that either has been augmented by inoculation there is no positive proof, nor even reason to believe. There are other and obvious causes of the augmentation : the dread of every evil is diminished by habit ; the disease has been so long existent in the metropolis, that it is become familiar to the inhabitants, and they are consequently less cautious of avoiding it.

particularly by yourself in your *Medical Memoirs*, and by a writer who signs J. S. in a periodical work published a few years ago, under the title of the *Monthly Ledger*, that writer has said much on the subject, and with considerable force of argument ; but I think his reasoning is not quite conclusive.

The number of deaths by the measles, as you justly observe, has advanced in proportion with the number of deaths by the smallpox ; but the measles cannot have been affected by inoculation.

The increased ease of communication between the countries and the city, invites thither an equally increased proportion of both perpetual and temporary residents; and the subjects among these are surely as liable to receive infection from patients in the natural disease, as from patients under inoculation.

THE ingenious authors of the Monthly Review, in their account of Dr. Watkinson's *Examination, &c.* Vol. LVI, page 482, attribute the increase in the smallpox article in the bills of mortality, to this supposed aggression of people. "The
 " most important argument," say they, "and what
 " we think tolerably decisive in exculpating ino-
 " culation, is drawn from a review of the bills
 " of mortality as far back as the year 1629, a
 " century before the introduction of that practice;
 " by which it appears, that the proportion of
 " deaths by the smallpox has been increasing in
 " gradual progression ever since that time, except-
 " ing indeed for the four last years in which it
 " has decreased: during a very considerable part
 " of this period, therefore, we must look for some
 " other cause of the increased mortality of the
 " smallpox in London; and we may reasonably
 " conclude

“ conclude that this cause, whatever it be, would
 “ operate equally since the introduction of inocu-
 “ lation as before. What this cause is, Dr. Wat-
 “ kinson has not attempted to ascertain.—We
 “ think the prodigiously increased conflux of fresh
 “ people out of the country, whose fears of the
 “ smallpox have been conquered by stronger in-
 “ citements of pleasure or interest than their an-
 “ cestors felt, will go a great way towards ac-
 “ counting for the fact.

BARON DIMSDALE, after pointing out some unimportant mistakes in Dr. Watkinson's calculations from the bills of mortality, does not deny the abovementioned increase of smallpox deaths previous to the introduction of inoculation. “How-
 “ ever,” says he, “ I do not deny that smallpox
 “ has been an increasing article before the com-
 “ mencement of inoculation; yet, not regularly
 “ progressive, as has been asserted, which may be
 “ observed by consulting table I.”—*Observations*,
 p. 101. Indeed he could not deny it, for that
 table (Vid. *Observations*, p. 98.) sufficiently de-
 monstrates it. For the ten years 1657,—1666,
 the total of smallpox deaths was 7472; for
 the ten years 1667,—1676, it was 12,127; for the
 ten

ten years 1677,—1686, it was 17,736. The years from 1686 to 1701 do not appear in the table. For the ten years 1701,—1710, the total was 12,548; for the ten years 1711,—1720, it was 19,530. Inoculation was introduced about 1722. For the ten years 1721,—1730, the total was 23,044; for the ten years 1731,—1740, it was 20,592; for the ten years 1741,—1750, it was 18,533; for the ten years 1751,—1760, it was 20,617; and for the ten years 1761,—1770, it was 24,234.

THE first position then I think must be given up, as too frail a foundation for a superstructure of valid argument against the practice.

THE second position militates against many proceedings universally allowed and approved, as much as against inoculation. To this position, the doctrine of preferring a greater certain good to a lesser contingent evil has been properly opposed, as a doctrine which is not objected to in other cases. The infliction of punishment on murderers and thieves, is indisputably necessary to the peace of society; but through the fallibility of human judgment, punishment designed only for the guilty,

is sometimes unhappily inflicted on the innocent. Every possible precaution however in every case should be taken, to preclude even unintentional harm to our fellow-creatures.

BUT if this position is permitted to operate against the practice in one instance, it must likewise operate against it in another. If the Society's inoculations are condemned, Baron Dimfdale's, mentioned in his *Thoughts*, p. 32 and 33, as conducted under his own direction in the town of Hertford in 1770 and 1774, will not stand exculpated. Hertford and Ware are large towns, are said to be only two miles distant, and have a continual and considerable intercourse between them, and a connexion with the villages of an adjacent populous country. When Baron Dimfdale inoculated 120 patients at Hertford in 1774, there must be a large number of subjects in Ware; for by your account, which is not controverted by the Baron, there were eighty natural smallpox deaths at that town in 1777, for which, rating the fatality at the highest estimation of one in five, there must have been 400 sick, besides all that were afterwards inoculated. Whatever restrictions might be imposed by the Baron,
those

those who know any thing of the conduct of the vulgar, must know that the inoculated and their friends, if not under inability from illness or local confinement, would continue their customary communication of business or pleasure with their tradesmen or acquaintance *. Now, if it be criminal to inoculate in London, because inoculation may probably spread the disease, it could not be less criminal to inoculate in Hertford, where there was an equal probability of spreading it ; and any family which might lose a relation by the means might justly say, it is no satisfaction to us that fifty lives have been saved by a procedure from which we have suffered so severely †.

BUT

*. Every body knows this to be the case in the natural small-pox ; the common people do not suffer the danger of communicating it to others, to prevent them from going where they are disposed to go.

† Vide Dimsdale's *Observations*, p. 118. Those who were resident on the spot, can best tell, whether the Hertford inoculations in 1770 and 1774 produced any such melancholy consequences as above hinted: I apprehend they did not, as the adversaries of the practice are always ready enough to publish any thing which they think may injure its cause. I have no intention to censure Baron Dimsdale for the Hertford inoculations; if the artificial disease had not been brought thither, the natural
one

BUT this Hertford inoculation, it may be said, was a public affair, and visits to the infected place might on one hand have been refrained, and admittance to the infected persons on the other refused. That they might do so, in a great measure is certain; but that they would do so, is, as has been already observed, highly improbable; and if any were injured by their carelessness, the inoculation must become originally chargeable with the injury. But a case yet stronger is suppose-able. A traveller, a stranger, totally unacquainted with Baron Dimdale's proceedings, might come to Hertford, a town full of contagion, might lodge there, contract the disease, proceed to his home in the county of Northampton or Leicester, fall

one would soon have come: I am credibly informed, that from time immemorial it has made its regular progress through the town once in five or six years, with its usual fatality. The Baron himself (*Thoughts*, p. 33.) indeed confirms this circumstance: "I verily believe," says he, "that within these ten years not six
 "persons have died in Hertford of this disease; whereas, before
 "the practice was so generally adopted, the smallpox has frequently been epidemic, and destroyed a great number of the
 "inhabitants, besides injuring the market and trade of the town
 "for a considerable time." Could the ablest advocate of inoculation have said a stronger thing in its favour?

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sick,

sick, die, and propagate the infection through a whole village, part of whose inhabitants might die also. It really would not be amiss for the Baron to consider, on his own principles, who in such a case must be the primary author of the accumulated mischief, “ and how far he is justified “ in a mode of practice so fatal to the lives of “ others.

THE Society inoculates a few patients in a neighbourhood, without that neighbourhood’s consent ; the Baron inoculates a town without the consent of travellers who ignorantly or necessarily pass through it. The neighbourhood and the traveller both sustain damage from the respective inoculations, and sure it will not be easy to decide which is the most criminal *.

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* Baron Dimfdale is not quite explicit respecting the cases of Mr. Penruddock’s and Lady Cornwallis’s servants (Vide his *Observations*, p. 60. 62.) whom he invited Dr. Watkinson to visit, in a confluent smallpox caught from inoculated patients ; he does not say whether those servants chose to remain in their respective families, and run the hazard of the natural disease ; or whether they would willingly have absented themselves from their services for a time, and were refused leave of absence ; or whether they

IN short, the discovery of inoculation is a discovery by which many thousands of lives have been and may be saved; but, like other great benefits, it may include a small portion of evil, which evil must be tolerated, or the use of the good be impracticable to any considerable extent.

BEFORE inoculation, however, is positively chargeable with evil, it should be remembered, that whenever an individual dies under the process of the artificial disease, or by the natural disease contracted from it, there cannot possibly be a certainty that such individual would not have died of that natural disease had inoculation never existed.

THE objections to the Society's practice I apprehend will appear much less valid, when a circumstance is properly considered which seems not to have been made an object of consideration.

they were desirous of being inoculated, and could neither afford the expence, nor obtain the operation gratis. Supposing one of these the real case, he should look at home, and remember who those patients might thank for having the smallpox.

PARTIAL inoculation, or inoculation without general consent in a place where the smallpox was totally unknown, or had not existed for half a century, would certainly be highly reprehensible ; but London is not such a place : the natural disease is there a perpetual resident, and all the opponents of the Society may be safely challenged to point out any one particular district, however small, through which, in the space of three or four years, it does not make its progress. Now, this admitted, the very worst inoculation can do is to accelerate its coming, where it otherwise would inevitably have come in a few years, perhaps in a few months, or even in a few weeks.

BUT inoculation in this case has its advantages. *First*, With regard to anticipating an epidemic constitution of air ; and *secondly*, with regard to diminution of infecting matter.—Supposing the existence of an epidemic constitution, or, in other words, a time in which the body is predisposed for the reception of variolous effluvia, or in which their operation produces a species of pox uncommonly malignant ; if this epidemic constitution be anticipated by inoculation, fewer of those who
disapprove

disapprove of the operation, or are improper subjects for it, will receive the disease, than would have received it in the course of nature *.

THAT the inoculated smallpox is contagious as well as the natural, cannot nor need not be denied; if it was not contagious, it could not be communicated, nor indeed could it be any longer the same disease: inoculation alters the degree only, not the quality †. But that the inoculated smallpox is less likely to extend infection than the natural, is indisputable. That the quantity of effluvia is proportioned to the number of pustules, is a position universally allowed; even Dimsdale himself admits it ‡. One hundred inoculated pa-

* That there is an epidemic constitution of air, I think experience clearly evinces, and on no other principle can the periodical return of the natural disease in great towns, at the distance of five, six, or seven years, be so easily accounted for.

† That part of the controversy between the Doctors Dimsdale and Watkinson, in which the former attempts to prove the smallpox communicable by inoculated patients, and his consequent invitations to the latter to view persons to whom it had been communicated by such patients, are frivolous.

‡ Vide *Thoughts*, p. 25.

tients,

tients, under the modern regimen, will scarcely have an hundred pustules each on an average, or ten thousand in the whole ; the miserable body of a confluent patient is covered with indistinguishable millions. But it will be said, the confluent patient is confined to his chamber ; the inoculated one is abroad in the street, obvious to the approach of every passenger. So much the worse in the former case, and so much the better in the latter. The confluent patient's chamber if he dies must be thrown open, and a stream of malignant particles, in their highest state of energy, dispersed at once among the neighbourhood ; the confluent patient if he lives must come out some time or other, and in general he will come out much too soon, an object of disgust and terror, deformed by the violence of the distemper, and loaded with its contagion. The inoculated patient is almost perpetually in the air, the action of which will gradually dissipate the effluvia exhaling from his body, and prevent their accumulating in his garments ; consequently he can be capable of retaining but a very inconsiderable portion of infection. A confluent patient, I apprehend, might communicate the disease by the
most

most instantaneous interview ; the inoculated patient, I should suppose, could communicate it only by an approximation of some considerable duration.

ADMITTING what has been often asserted, that fear, by acting on the nervous system, sometimes produces the smallpox, the natural disease must be infinitely more mischievous than inoculation ; the confluent subject walks the streets, as before hinted, imprinted with alarming tokens of his dangerous condition, so visible and peculiar as not to be mistaken ; the inoculated subject has at most only a few pustules not to be distinguished from common pimples but by a close examination, and often he has none.

BESIDES the mildness of the disease, the artificial smallpox can boast another superiority over the natural, in the shortness of its duration. When a family is inoculated all at once, the whole affair will be over in a fortnight ; when the distemper proceeds by common contagion, it will last six or seven weeks, perhaps eleven or twelve ; the worst species, it is well known, comes not to its crisis in less than twenty days, and to this when the
time

time of recovery is added, and one subject is supposed to fall eight or ten days after another, no great number of persons in a house will be necessary to produce the abovementioned continuance : and what holds respecting a single family, will hold yet more strongly respecting a district. I appeal to every person who is a smallpox subject, and an objector to the practice of inoculation, whether he would not rather chuse to have his neighbourhood cleared at once in a month, than to be within the reach of that infection, sometimes here, sometimes there, for half a year? In the one case, he might quit his residence, or confine himself to it, or use various precautions which he could not conveniently use in the other.

THE anti-inoculists, if Baron Dimisdale can be properly so termed, for he does not disapprove of his own practice, triumph much on a confession of Dr. Watkinson, “That the physicians to the Society inoculate in narrow streets, in little courts, and in the midst of those who have not had the disease ; and even on ground floors, where a number of children continue to play during the course of the illness: in short, where the inter-
“ course

“course between the well and the sick is unavoidable, and without taking the least care to prevent the infection from spreading.”

THESE narrow streets and little courts, if they could boast a total exemption from the natural disease, would doubtless be very improper places for the practice of inoculation; but sooner or later the natural disease will most assuredly visit them; and the children of their inhabitants, when actually under, or at least when just recovered from it, will as assuredly play with their companions: and where, in this case, can be the difference between an epidemic produced by inoculation in June 1779, and an epidemic produced by natural contagion in June 1780? There is surely no reason to suppose that the subjects who contract it in one case, would not have contracted it in the other.

THE universal prevalence of the natural small-pox in London at all times, is indeed but too self-evident; but if proof of the fact were needed, such proof might easily be deduced from Baron Dimsdale's own assertion. He asserts (*Observations*, page 124.) that the annual number of small-

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pox deaths for ten years is about 2300, and consequently, allowing one instance of fatality in six instances of infection, that 14,000 persons per annum pass through the disease; 17,000 he admits to be the number annually born, and supposes that near half of these die every year, under two years of age, of diseases peculiar to infancy. The whole increase of London, by births surviving the aforesaid age, or at least a number equal thereto, *viz.* about 8500, must therefore inevitably be natural patients within the year, together with 5500 of the ingressors; and the sum total of those ingressors, if it can be ascertained by the bills of mortality, does not much exceed that number *. Now, if out of 17,000 births and 5533 ingressors, amounting in all to 22,533 persons, 8500 die under two years of age of diseases peculiar to infancy, and 14,000 pass through the smallpox, amounting in all to 22,500, it is difficult to conceive that there are in London any considerable number who are not, sooner or later, patients in the natural disease; and of course it is difficult to conceive how inoculation can possibly render

* The bills make the medium of deaths for the ten years 1766,—1775, 22,533, 17,000 a supposed medium of births deducted, leaves 5533 for the sum total of incomers.

that disease more prevalent than it otherwise would be.

THE whole of the matter seems to be this, about 14,000 subjects now naturally sicken *, and about 2300 die ; were the practice of inoculation universally to obtain, the number of artificially sick would probably, for some years, be nearly the same, but the instances of mortality would soon be diminished, perhaps to one or two in a thousand.

BARON DIMSDALE, however, in another place (*Thoughts*, page 44.) seems to think that there is always existing in London a kind of principal stock of smallpox subjects, which is continually added to and taken from in an equal proportion, and among which the sphere of infection would be extended by inoculation. This principal stock he supposes to be large indeed!—he opines, but gives no reason for his opinion, that only one in eight of those who have not had the disease is annually seized with it ; consequently he says, if 15,264 pass through it in a year, there will remain 122,112 ; but here he is mistaken, for he

* This is spoken in the gross, not distinguishing the small proportion of persons at present inoculated.

multiplies the 15,264 by 8, and if the said 15.26, or one eighth is deducted, only seven eighths, or 106,848 can remain. This, however, is an error of small importance; the calculation of the whole must be immensely too high. Supposing London to contain a million of inhabitants, and every twentieth person to be a subject, the number will amount only to 50,000: but the existence of even such a stock as this is not at all probable. It cannot have existed from any period before the smallpox became common in London, for between any such period and the present time, the whole body of population must have been often changed; and how it can possibly have accumulated since does not appear. It has been just demonstrated, as fully as the evidence we are possessed of can demonstrate, that there sicken of the smallpox annually, one year with another, about 14,000, and that 14,000 is a number equal to the whole innate increase and ingression of the city, excepting such as die in infancy of diseases peculiar to that stage of life; and if the deduction then keeps pace with the addition, where can be the increase to form the above supposed principal? Eight subjects annually escaping, for one annually sickening, might perhaps be a proper

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per proportion for some parts of England; but whoever examines closely the state of the city of London, would perhaps find the proportion of twenty sickening to one escaping, much nearer the matter. But whatever be the number this principal stock contains, or however it originated, it should seem that it must consist of two classes; either such as are not within the reach of infection, or such as are naturally exempted from its influence. The first class cannot be numerous, for in London a person to be out of the reach of infection must confine himself to his house, and admit nobody to his presence; and of the second class, or natural exempts, it has never been imagined that there are many; but were they ever so frequent, they could not surely be endangered by inoculation.

BARON DIMSDALE objects much to the Society's practice, because it may "endanger the lives of many unhappy persons who may be in an ill state of health, or unwilling to submit to inoculation, and yet are unable to avoid the infection." This objection would certainly be valid, could it be proved that the same persons would not be equally, or indeed in a greater degree endangered, by the natural disease: but the
objection

objection is futile, because it cannot be supported by proof *.

HE objects also, the situation of the London poor, “ their habitations in close alleys, courts, “ &c. cold and dirty ; their want of necessaries, “ assistance and care, with regard to the exhibi- “ tion of medicine, and the regulation of diet.” Those objections also would be valid, did not every one of them militate infinitely less against inoculation, than against the natural disease, the occurrence of which that inoculation is designed to obviate. The mildness of the distemper, in one case, must render all these circumstances of much less consequence than the severity of it now renders them in the other †. With regard however to matter of assistance, if by assistance he means the attendance of nurses, his own testi-

* Throughout the whole of Baron Dimfdale’s argumentation, one might suppose he was writing of some newly discovered country where the smallpox was totally unknown, instead of London where it has existed for centuries.

† The miserable situation of the London poor, the closeness of their habitations, and every other peculiar of the city that can tend to enhance the malignity of putrid diseases, must operate in favour of inoculation ; as all these circumstances must increase the fatality of the natural distemper.

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mony may be produced against him. Speaking of the inoculating hospital at Pancras, *Observations*, page 14. he says, "As there is always a
 "sufficient number of patients who are well
 "enough to assist infants and others who are un-
 "able to walk about, the use or necessity for
 "nurses will be very small in this hospital." And further, (speaking of the Society's practice, where he thought it would serve his purpose to introduce it, *Thoughts*, p. 41. *Observations* p. 133.) he says, "The inoculated may be divided into two
 "classes; one in whom the distemper is so mild
 "as to admit the parties to go abroad; the other
 "where the number of pustules is so considerable
 "as to confine the parties at home; by far the
 "greater number will be of the first sort, and
 "whatever orders may be given, it will be im-
 "possible to restrain them from taking undue li-
 "berties; the children who are of an age for it
 "will be found in the streets with their former
 "play-fellows, and the men and women who are
 "able will be endeavouring to get into their
 "former employments, to earn a little money,
 "without regarding the injury they may occa-
 "sion to others."

THOSE

THOSE who were able to go out, would surely be able to nurse their children at home ; and those who were obliged to seek for employment abroad, would have been obliged to have fought it when just recovered from the natural disease, or even while that disease was in their families. For it may perhaps be safely asserted, that no one has the smallpox in London by inoculation who would not otherwise have had it by common contagion. Among the dangers produced by the Society's practice the Baron ranks that of the patients' " when recovered, falling forth in their infected " cloaths." This is to be sure an imprudent and, possibly, a mischievous procedure, but it cannot be a tenth part so mischievous as in the case of the natural distemper.

BARON DIMSDALE nevertheless, though he demonstrates himself no friend to inoculation of the poor, seems to have little objection to inoculation of the rich : perhaps this is rather too lucrative a branch of his own business to be readily given up. " Persons of fortune," says he, " who inoculate at their own houses, from a just " sense of the infectious nature of the disease, ob-
 " serve

“ serve a most scrupulous care to keep the inoculated separate from others *.” Whatever juster sense persons of fortune may have of the nature of the disease than the rest of mankind, I do not know in what respect their care concerning it is superior to the care of others. They do not adopt the mode which the Baron proposed to his Russian Imperial Patroness to establish by her supreme authority in her own dominions: *viz.* “ That of giving public notice of their intention to inoculate, mentioning the time when the operation is to be performed, and also of their perfect recovery †.” They do not, like their ancestors in the time of the plague, mark their doors with a cross, nor even inscribe them with the word INOCULATION in capitals. Just such care as they take when the natural smallpox is in their families, they take when those families are inoculated; and indeed if they took more, they would be chargeable with absurdity, as acting with more caution in case of a lesser evil than of a greater ‡.

* *Remarks*, page 3.

† *Thoughts*, page 4.

‡ Query, what care was taken in the two great families whose servants contracted the smallpox from inoculated patients under the Baron's own direction? Should those servants have been permitted to remain in their respective infected families? Vide *Observations*, p. 57.

What kind of caution, however, they really use, let the Baron himself determine. “In London,” says he, “it has been the general custom for those who intend to inoculate, to take into account all the circumstances that may be material for the conveniency of their families and friends, and these being settled to their minds, few precautions are thought necessary respecting the security of others: what passes previous to the eruptive fever does not claim our consideration, since it is universally allowed that no infection can be communicated before that time; but it is after this period the danger begins, and the disease may be spread by the intercourse of visitants, trades-people, washer-women, servants and others; and in a mild state of the disease, the frequent excursions of the sick by way of airings, and often in hired carriages of various kinds, contribute greatly towards spreading the infection. It would perhaps be deemed a designed omission, if the inoculators were not also supposed to be of the number of those that contribute to spread the disease.”——This acknowledgment was surely rather inadvertent; it is a confession that the rich communicate the disease as well as the poor; that inoculating those
 who

who can pay, is injurious to the community as well as inoculating those who cannot. The Baron however, it must be allowed, in the same work, recommends a more circumspect conduct; and I most heartily second his recommendation. Humanity demands our strictest attention in every respect to the health of others. Whenever the smallpox, natural or artificial, or indeed any other dangerous disease of a contagious nature is in a family, it should be made known in the neighbourhood, and if any convenient method of indicating it to strangers could be thought of, it might be useful, by preventing an unnecessary and often detrimental access to such infected places. A benevolent and considerate person would not, in such circumstances, solicit his friends to visit him, nor would he permit (as far as prevention was in his power) his children or servants to visit those of others *.

THE Baron's intimation, (*Remarks*, p. 9.) that "an action for damages would lie against a person

* The conduct of mankind in general is totally dissimilar. In towns and villages the prevalence of any disease is most cautiously concealed, lest it should injure trade. Visiting sick persons is a practice equally frequent and injurious; it is, perhaps, sometimes fatal to the patient, and often to the visitors.

“ who, by inoculating *horned cattle* for a contagious disease, should spread such disease in a neighbourhood,” is really curious : he has here stepped, perhaps a little improperly, out of the road of physic into the road of law ; and although he does not declare his opinion, it is not difficult to perceive that he would be very well pleased to see a prosecution commenced against the Society for inoculating the Poor †. But whatever may be the Baron’s wishes, it is to be hoped there will always be found enough of the intelligent and liberal amongst mankind, to defeat the efforts of prejudice and self-interest. The Grand Jury of Essex, some years ago, would not prefer a bill of indictment against Mr. Sutton ; and Baron Dimsdale might not find it an easy matter to introduce a bill into the House of Commons for the suppression of the Society’s practice, nor even for the erection of an immense castle at Pancras to confine this mischievous giant Inoculation, un-

† Possibly in this matter of the horned cattle the Baron is mistaken. If any person were liable to an action, it should seem to be the employer, not the employed, or person inoculating for hire ; and the employer may say he has an undoubted right to do what he will with his own property, till the disposal of it is taken from him by an act of parliament,

der the management of himself or some of his family *.

THERE is, however, a proposed act of parliament mentioned by him, for the obtainment whereof I believe all the truly benevolent would be willing to exert their utmost endeavours: an “Act to oblige every parish,” not “with exception of such large places as might be thought too populous to be included,” but without exception of any place whatever, “to offer inoculation to all their poor who should be willing to admit of it, to maintain them during their illnesses, to employ as operator a person who should have had some education in medicine, either as physician, surgeon, or apothecary; and to renew the offer once in five years†.”

THAT a proposal of this kind should originate from Baron Dimsdale is something extraordinary, considering his insuperable aversion to inoculation without general consent; but perhaps an act of the legislature, in his opinion,

* Vide *Thoughts*, page 57.

† *Thoughts*, page 60.

can sanctify all improprieties, reconcile all contradictions, and remove all difficulties; or perhaps he thinks difficulties occur only in that interdicted place London, and respecting the Society's practice.

PROBABLY, however, no one act of the legislature ever conferred so important and extensive a benefit as such an act as the abovementioned would confer*; but until there is a probability of that benefit being obtained, it is pity the partial but laudable endeavours of the Society should be discouraged, especially, as has been shewn, those endeavours produce good, without producing any evil which would not otherwise have been produced.

THE Society, as I have been informed, have lately adopted a plan which promises to be of the greatest utility. They propose to engage a very considerable number of medical practitioners, in

* Parishes might think themselves happy in the enactment of such a law of kind compulsion. If medical gentlemen would not be so liberal as to inoculate gratis, the expence of a whole parish inoculating would not amount to half the expence of maintaining a few families in the natural disease.

different parts of the city and suburbs, to inoculate *gratis* all the poor who are willing to submit to the operation. As a small compensation for his trouble and expence, each practitioner will, for every five hundred subjects so inoculated, be presented with a gold medal, and for every hundred with a silver one. The salutary effects of this procedure must soon be visible; and every gentleman who may become intitled to the reception of the abovementioned honorary testimony of his disinterested readiness to assist the distressed, must contemplate it as a nobler mark of distinction, than the most pompous titles kings or princes can bestow.

I AM, SIR, with the sincerest regard for a person of your distinguished philanthropy, who, at the risk of your health, and the expence of your time, are using your daily endeavours to restore health and happiness to the habitations of afflicted Poverty,

Your most obedient

London, May
15th, 1779.

humble Servant.

1802

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